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SIGHT AND SOUND

VOL 13 NO 50

ARTICLES:

HOLLYWOOD DEFENDED

PLANNED PRODUCTION

NEW ZEALAND NEWSREELS

TEACHER FILM MAKERS

CONTRIBUTORS:

Wolfgang Wilhelm

Alexei Sazonov

Herman G. Weinberg

Keith F. Bean

George H. Elvin

6D.

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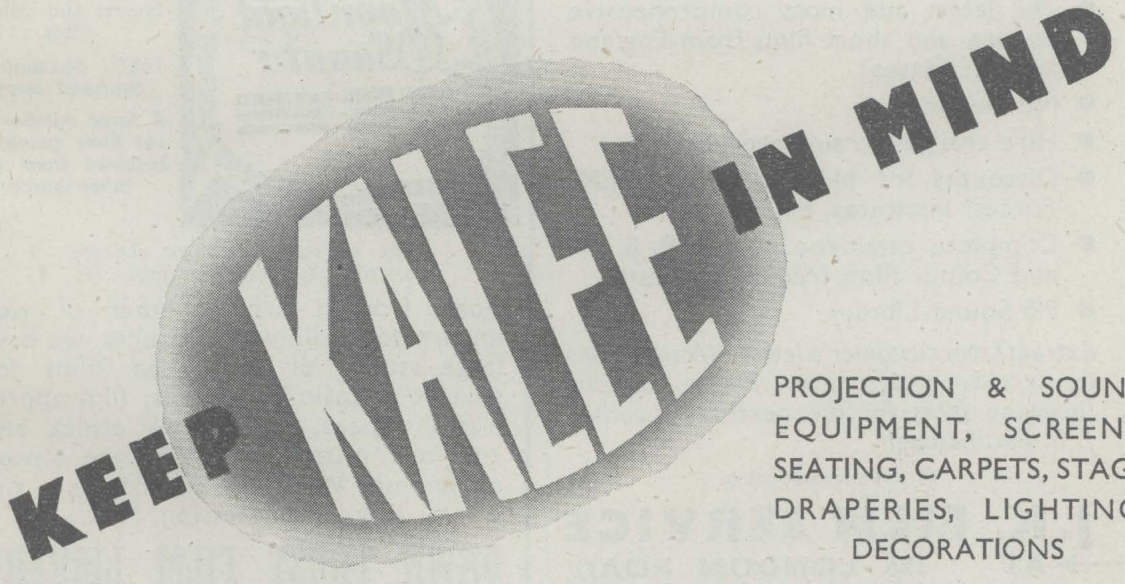

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The Uses of Colour*

THE PUBLIC has not been quite so hospitable to the precocious colour child, because of the intense personal variation in physiological and psychological reaction to colour of individuals. One man's green might be another man's poison. A painting by El Greco for instance, about which myself and two friends hold lively recollections which nevertheless in each case centred around a different emphasis and a different colour.

Artists demonstrate their individuality by such colour preferences. One such is Van Gogh with his known prediction for glowing, exciting yellow. Yet different workers have given very different emotional and interpretative meanings to the same colours. Such variations make it very difficult to employ colour symbolism, and such variations also greatly affect personal judgment of a film.

One film may be condemned by a critic because it contains a preponderance of a colour which he personally dislikes. Another production of less general merit may be acclaimed because its general hues coincides closely with the colour preferences of the observer.

My own idea of colour film will be achieved when two people discussing a picture would say, 'Was it in colour?' 'Well, do you know, I really forget. I believe it was.'

There has been criticism regarding the excessive and unimaginative use of blatant colour, and it is a fact that in many cases the relationship between colour and picture content has not been adequately recognised. Here and there, however, outstanding use has been made of differences in intensity and range. As an example do you remember the sequence from the film *Blood and Sand*, in which a band of bullfighters were returning in a train to their native village? The scene opens with a collection of drab looking figures around the seats of the carriage. They are unsuccessful and grumbling, and their attitude is emphasised by the drabness of their treatment. Then one speaks of the only successful member of the party, a newspaper is lowered, and instantly the camera cuts into a close-up of a gay sparkling colourful figure seated in front of the slashing crimson lining of a cloak. Even more subtly, as the scene once more sinks back into dullness of idea, the successful one once more raises his newspaper and by blotting out himself and his cloak, restores the picture to an overall drabness.

I believe that the individual director can develop, as the individual artist develops, characteristic style which will enable his work to be recognised immediately and which will be a measure of his ability to express himself in terms of colour.

The use of colour has tended to develop into two opposite directions. In U.S.A. the stress is on strongly saturated clear and brilliant colours and prints which will show well in even the most humble of American cinemas, prints which will bring life and sparkle to the screen. In this country, where it was the custom for directors and others to announce with solemn enthusiasm their desire to make 'Colour pictures without colour', there has been an opposite tendency to exploit the quieter values, and to make use of the dramatic contrast of bright colour passages within a framework which is mostly quiet in tone.

My friend Mr. Neame, for instance, photographed *This Happy Breed*. He found, from the technical point of view, that colour photography tended to isolate and stress colours which, while actually present in the subject

*From a speech delivered by Mr. Jack Conway to the R.P.S.

were not noticeable under normal conditions.

To combat this effect modifications of exposure and processing had to be adopted, and in particular the overall contrast of the picture had to be lowered in the processing by working to a lower contrast factor. One effect of this had been to degrade the apparent definition of the picture and experiments have shown that the standard of apparent definition was closely associated with the contrast ratio of the projected picture.

Added problems arose from the fact that the director, quite rightly and wisely, had stipulated that his suburban family would live in a 'real' suburban little house, and not live, move and have its being in large size and unreal sets. This meant that the relatively large quantities of light and light units, and all the personnel and other paraphernalia were somewhat cramped together. The results I believe have justified the decision. The apparent drabness of the actual family pictures has further been accentuated by interspersing very colourful scenes of large public happenings.

Hollywood Defended

by THOMAS QUINN CURTISS

A GREAT deal has been said and written against Hollywood as an institution and most of it has been said or written more than once. That the cinema capital very often richly deserves these public chastisements which it receives constantly and gratis, can hardly be questioned, but that it is guilty of the following charges brought against it again and again seems to be taking far too much for granted. First, that it is barren of any technical and artistic improvements whatsoever and is wholly dependent on European inspiration. Secondly, that it is a Juggernaut calculated to steam-roller any formerly and otherwise intelligent player into an irritating robot, and to squeeze all sensitivity out of any formerly and otherwise intelligent director. And lastly, that it is oblivious of great literature on which it might draw to its own immense advantage.

Inventions

To begin with, almost every technical and artistic improvement to have been made in the cinema in the last thirty years has come from California. Griffith—together with his cameraman, the late Billy Bitzer, invented virtually the entire bag of movie tricks from the defunct iris-in-iris-out to the close-up. It was afterwards that they were put to such eccentric use by U.F.A. and the Russians. The talking film, of course, came from Hollywood and the progress made in recording sound and in perfecting the sound track all took place there. Today the only worth-while work accomplished in the colour films' development comes from the much-abused, plutocratic movie centre on the Pacific. *Intolerance*—a characteristic Hollywood product of its day—explored the dramatic potentialities of cross-cutting when Eisenstein was still a University student. The climatic sequence of Pudovkin's "Mother"—the ice breaking on the river—was an obvious borrowing of the climatic sequence in *Way Down East*. The mass and mob scenes of the Soviet flickers, which won such loud, critical praise, were but slight improvements of Thomas Ince's property of ten years earlier. One hears, too, much talk of the influence the foreign film has had on the American. To the alert movie-goer almost the opposite appears to be the truth. Chaplin's *A Woman of Paris*, James Cruze's *Beggar on Horseback*, Malcolm St. Clair's *Grand Duchess and the*

Waiter and Lubitsch's *Forbidden Paradise* all ventured far into satire six to eight years before Rene Clair commenced work on *Sous les Toits de Paris* or any of his famous films of the Thirties. Today, Preston Sturges—in the pay of Paramount Pictures— is displaying an inventiveness and imagination scarcely inferior to that of Sacha Guitry before the fall of France. The notion that the American movies swallowed an overdose of glamour and consequently were incapable of looking on life's less silky side may likewise be put down as pure nonsense. You will search the French, Russian and pre-Hitler German films in vain to discover more caustic and daring naturalism than of Von Stroheim's *Greed*, Barbin's *Driven*, Ford's *Grapes of Wrath* and Griffith's *Isn't Life Wonderful?*

A Fallacy Exposed

And now for the charge of the wholesale destruction of actors and actresses —what evidence have we here? Positively none. Certainly no one in their right mind would seriously claim that the acting that Greta Garbo did in Sweden was superior to her performances in *Flesh and the Devil*, *Love*, *Grand Hotel* and *Ninotchka*. Pola Negri was much better after she had made the trans-Atlantic crossing than before, and her best work is found not in the German *Passion* but in the Hollywood *Hotel Imperial*. One need only compare the performances that Jannings gave while on the West Coast (*The Patriot*, *Sins of the Father* etc.) with those he has given since his return to Germany to realize that the harm that Hollywood is capable of is grossly overrated. George Arliss, Helen Hayes, Leslie Howard, the Lunts, W. C. Fields, John Barrymore and many other players of all kinds and descriptions have managed to appear before the Los Angeles cameras without at once dropping dead artistically.

We still have before us the Hollywoodian indifference to the first-rate in literature. But this, too, falls away very quickly. What we have here is a case of mistaken identity on the part of the fault-finder. The seeming indifference is actually sound wisdom. The great novel is not grist for the movie mill. No entirely first-rate novel has ever been converted into an entirely first-rate film and it is increasingly doubtful whether the transition will ever be made. The ingredients of the great novel are poetry, philosophy, ideas; the ingredients of the great movie are exotic backgrounds, violent contrasts and, above all, action. It is no mere coincidence that every good film from *Potemkin* to *The Gold Rush* and from *Greed* to *The Informer* contains a chase. The novels best suited to the cinema are not the first-rate ones nor are they (as the cynics will immediately suggest) the tenth-rate ones. They are the ones in between. The late Vincent Belasco Ibanez was (perhaps unintentionally at first) one of the most successful screen writers ever filmed. Very nearly all of his major novels became celebrated motion pictures: *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, *Mare Nostrum*, *The Torrent*, *The Temptress*, *Blood and Sand*, *Enemies of Women* and his own scenario, *Circe the Enchantress*. Now and again under stupid, uplift advice or pressure, and against its better judgment the Californian cinema will undertake to tackle Tolstoi or Dostoyevsky. The results inevitably prove financially unprofitable and aesthetically embarrassing. The movie is fated to draw its literary inspiration not from Shakespeare, Ibsen, Dickens and Proust, but from *The Prisoner of Zenda* of Anthony Hope, *Quo Vadis?* of Sienkiewicz, *The Clansman* (Birth of a Nation) of Thomas Dixon, *Sorrell and Son* of Warwick Deeping, *Ben Hur* of Lew Wallace, Steinbecks' *Werke in Toto*, *Gone With the Wind* of Margaret Mitchell, *The Covered Wagon* of Emerson Hough and *Back Home and Broke* of George Ade.

PLANNED PRODUCTION

GEORGE H. ELVIN

Secretary of the Association of Cine-Technicians

WHEN THE war is over we shall all be a little tired. It would be grave folly to shelter behind that and only make half-hearted efforts to win the Peace. Along that path leads the sure way to another war in a generation or so. We must win the Peace, we must start planning to win it now, and look to the best of wartime measures for some of the most likely means to be utilised for that purpose. It may well happen that certain wartime institutions will be a combination of what is best, and should be retained, and of what should most certainly go. The Ministry of Information falls within this category. It is so clearly identified with censorship that it must cease to function as such at the very first appropriate opportunity. But it would be tragic if all the Ministry's other activities ceased, as inevitably they will, unless alternative arrangements are made now. Its publications (which are outside the scope of this article) and its films have led the field in their respective spheres. Something comparable can be just as invaluable in the post-war years.

M.O.I. Production

What is the M. of I.'s wartime film record? Firstly, it has provided a co-ordinating channel for all film production. Today films are planned and not left to a field of competing interests each pursuing their own courses. The Ministry's Films Division is responsible for almost all film requirements of Government Departments and official bodies, apart from the three Services which have their own film units. It, of course, issues and approves the production of films for theatrical distribution and some of the best of the many excellent films dealing with current events, or having them as their background, bear the Ministry's label or carry its benevolent approval The Crown Film Unit, controlled by the Ministry, has a film production record second to none.

M.O.I. Distribution

On the non-theatrical side the Ministry's record is, if anything, even more distinguished. It has developed with distinction a vast new enterprise. Its Central Film Library handles non-theatrical distribution for all civilian Government Departments. During the past six months it has lent films to more than five thousand separate organisations. All organisations are welcome to use the library. There is no discrimination or bias, political or otherwise. The Library is made up of 14,000 copies of 800 separate titles, nearly 500 of which have been produced since 1940. Between 11,000 and 12,000 copies of films are issued each month. In addition, mobile units give 1,400 shows a week to audiences of over a quarter of a million people. All this activity is without charge to the users and general public. It is a State service to the community costing probably less than a quarter of a million pounds a year.

How can this Service be adapted to the needs of Peace? The theatrical side of its activities can continue. Production should be centred around the Crown Film Unit to continue with its greater experience and scope the work of its forerunner, the pre-war G.P.O. Film Unit. It is now housed at a Studio which presumably will revert to private commercial production after the war. Steps should be taken at once to ensure an adequate post-war home for the Crown Film Unit.

Otherwise, the war will end, the Ministry be disbanded, the studio be acquired by its former owners, and the Unit will be disbanded before anyone can cry halt. The tasks of reconstruction which await us will need to be brought home to the thirty million weekly filmgoers just as the problems of war have been explained to them through the screen.

The Technician's Views

But it is on the non-theatrical side, as in war, that the greatest stress must be laid. The views of the technicians responsible for British film production have recently been published.* At the outset it is stated that approaches to Government Departments by the A.C.T. revealed a complete lack of plan for post-war documentary and educational film production. Hence the technicians themselves have put forward their views. Documentary film, it is claimed, has a part to play in the whole sphere of post-war reconstruction and planning: in education, agriculture, housing, health, reconstitution of industry, and so on. The type of film which has been made during the war under Ministry of Information sponsorship will, therefore, be just as essential in postwar years. Envisage an organisation such as the Central Film Library, adapted to the times of peace and the service it can render, for example, to education. No school, local authority or other organisation would be precluded from using films because they could not afford them. And it should not be overlooked that frequently the poorer financially the organisation, the more useful films can be to it. The memorandum makes the following main points:

(1) There must be a Government Department to take over the duties of the Film Division of the Ministry of Information. Either some new body must be created or it must be attached to an existing Ministry.

It would be gross folly to leave each Ministry and each organisation to seek out its own salvation.

(2) There must be created as soon as possible a co-ordinating body to serve as an Advisory Panel to the Ministry. The Committee should be composed of representatives of the appropriate Ministries, the Board of Education, the film makers and specialised users of documentary films, including the teaching profession. Its immediate task should be that of survey and preparation.

(3) The scope and framework of a post-war plan is suggested in all its aspects: production, administration, finance, distribution, equipment and maintenance. Particular emphasis is laid on the question of equipment. It is useless making films unless there are means of showing them.

State Control

Finally, it is clear that the choice we have to make is between a reversion to pre-war methods, which left the production of documentary and educational films in the hands of any sponsor who had the money and inclination to make them, or a properly directed and co-ordinated Government policy, assisted by an adequate subsidy. The latter is the only way to ensure the full development of the use of such films for the benefit of the community. In this way film production would become one of the most valuable servants of the nation. In brief, the post-war years must continue to see, as during the war, planned and co-ordinated production of documentary and educational films for all users.

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* *Documentary and Educational Films—a Memorandum on planning for production and use in post-war Britain.* The Association of Cine-Technicians, 2 Soho Square, London, W.1.

KARL MAYER

An Appreciation by
WOLFGANG WILHELM

THE CINEMA lover may well ask himself why Karl Mayer the name of the man responsible for the films *Caligari*, *The Last Laugh*, and *Sunrise* had not appeared on the credit titles of any fiction film of the "talkie" era.

It was not that Karl Mayer had left the world of Cinema. On the contrary, he still was giving all his energy and genius to it. He refused to let his name appear on the credit titles as a protest against what he believed to be the wicked tendency to underestimate the intelligence of audiences.

Karl Mayer had fought this tendency from the moment that twenty-five years ago he came into contact with film production. Against the costly, over-titled historical films in which German film production excelled in the early twenties, against their weak plots, and gigantic décor he set *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Against the ever-growing tendency to title the then silent films to such an extent that audiences were robbed of any chance to give their own interpretation to both situations and characters, he set *The Last Laugh*, a film with only one printed caption.

The success of both films proved audiences to move on a far higher plane of intelligence than that accredited to them by producers, writers and directors alike. Cinema audiences everywhere at last experienced the thrill of being able to animate with their own emotions the black and white shadows that moved in front of them across the screen.

The introduction of sound made much that Karl Mayer's untiring energy had achieved in the "silent" days null and void. Without lengthening the running time of films fast-spoken dialogue could say many times more than printed captions had been able to before; and though recorded music played by fine bands and orchestras instead of the miserable trio underneath the screen could now be heard in the smallest hall, it merely lingered most of the time as background music underneath the flood of words which robbed the onlooker of the thrill of "co-authorship", reducing him to an even lesser rank that he held during the silent period.

Karl Mayer was one of the few to struggle against the "photographed dialogue" technique in order to bring "moving pictures" back into their own rights again. It was no wonder that he felt attracted to the young and vigorous documentary film movement.

Soon after his arrival in this country, in 1934, he met Paul Rotha and joined him as scenario adviser. It is most revealing for this collaboration that the name "Karl Mayer" appeared again on celluloid in *The Fourth Estate*, the film sponsored by *The Times*, but never shown.

Without severing his ties with Rotha Karl Mayer recently became scenario editor of *Two Cities*, and Filippo del Giudice, its managing director, put the many young writers he gave their chance under Karl Mayer's care.

It is most tragic that this association, has come to such a sudden end.

The young writers, directors and producers he had met and guided have lost much; so has the cinema-going public. It is the duty of the former, whose work will fill much of the future screentime, to respect the latter as Karl Mayer did. They could pay no better homage to him.

Naval Reflections

by Keith F. Bean

GREAT ENRICHMENT of educative resources will become evident when the swords are again turned into ploughshares. That may sound paradoxical at a moment when great thought and planning are being devoted to the post-war recruitment of teachers—worries symbolised by the look of deep concentration on the brow of Rodney Ackland as he cuts his film on this thorny subject, the encouragement of men and women into the teaching profession in large numbers.

But the enrichment of the resources will be there. Not only will it be ascribable to the forward-looking initiative of Education Minister R.A. Butler; not only to the increasing awareness in governmental and trading circles of the growing necessity for more and better pre-industrial and adult education. Education, supreme task of peace, will owe much to its forced-draught development in the warlike departments—the services and the pre-service training organisations.

Notably, I think, this will be evident in the use of films, film strip and other visual aids. All the fighting services have made great strides in this work. It is not decrying the thorough and painstaking work of extra-service educationists, before or since the war, to say that—nor to say that the field of experience and experiment has, by the essence of total mobilisation, been very much wider than previous research could reach.

The services are the first to admit that they have had great opportunities. Moreover they freely acknowledge the aid and guidance of experts—film, technical and educational—who have freely co-operated from the very inception of the services' work and continue to contribute a great deal to it.

Naval Training

Training in the Royal Navy, of which I have recently had some glimpses, serves as an example of this and other aspects of service education.

As the First Lord, Mr. A. V. Alexander, has stated, the first eighteen months or two years of war were for the Navy a period of tense strain and anxiety. There was little time for anything much beyond the urgent business of survival. But from about the autumn of 1941 the work of building up the educational branch has proceeded steadily and with cumulative effectiveness.

It was based from the first on consultations with those who had made, tested and worked with visual and other aids of all kinds but particularly films and film strip. Co-operation with United States and Dominion producers was in accord with this policy. Results have been truly formidable, particularly within the last twelve months or so.

Taking the sound view that films, as comparative newcomers to service training, were not generally appreciated by those who used them or might use them in instruction, the Navy started with basic principles. Naval training fell into three sections: (i) imparting comprehension of main principles, (ii) explaining detail and fixing it in the memory and (iii) imparting familiarity by practical experience. In all these sections films and other visual aids had their use.

Never assuming that films alone could replace other methods, the Navy nevertheless pointed out that vision had a more enduring effect on the memory and a more stimulating effect on the mind than could be achieved by non-visual methods. But to visual aids, it was emphasised, oral commen-

tary and analysis were an essential accompaniment and where possible the sense of touch should also be used in this combined operation of assaulting, seizing and consolidating in the trainee's mind with facts.

The dome teacher was a classical example of the employment of all three senses—sight, sound and touch—through a combination of projected visual images, the commentary of the instructor and the sound and feeling of the gun in the trainee's hands. The link trainer in flying training was another combination although here the visual approach was confined to the dials and other internal fittings of the pilot's cockpit.

The Value of the Visual

The Director of Naval Training and his assistants proved and propagated that visual methods were superior in securing initial comprehension, that they made the spoken word more effective in teaching detail, that they fixed matters more quickly and surely in the memory—and therefore that there was ample justification for a greater degree of visual instruction.

Despite limitations in facilities for making films and multiplying copies of them, and the universal problem of manpower limitations, the Admiralty set out with a programme on the broadest possible basis in an attempt to cover every subject of instruction in Admiralty requirements.

The scope is indicated by the general uses for which the films were needed:

(*a*) Background instruction for new-entry officers and ratings;

(*b*) General education, including an insight into the Empire war effort;

(*c*) Technical and scientific instruction;

(*d*) Instruction in tactical subjects and fighting methods;

(*e*) Recognition of ships and aircraft;

(*f*) Revision, testing and supplementing technical knowledge.

A glimpse at the subject lists shows the application of film and film strip to these needs. Radar training is very largely done by film and film strip. Gunnery, engineering, combined operations, Fleet Air Arm training are strongly developed film subjects. Film and strip have again been very successful in teaching meteorology and the handling and maintaining of new weapons.

Beside constant expansion has gone constant experiment both in material and method as well as in general efficacy of visual aids as a whole. In all this research the Admiralty experts are careful to make no claim to final conclusions or even to conclusions which are automatically applicable beyond their own work.

Film and Film Strip

Neverthless they say that their experiments have proven that, properly used, a combination of film and film strip can increase the efficiency of instruction by as much as thirty per cent.—and this both as immediate and long-term reaction, tested one day later and six weeks later.

Finding the formula for this "properly used combination" has also been the subject of research.

The type (as well as the subject) of the film influences the formula. A morale film, to induce the required state of mind in the trainee, is quite different from a comprehension film for introduction to a subject, or revision of it. Different again is the practice film which provides opportunities for trainees' skill requiring a high degree of visual efficiency. Most common of the Navy's instructional films is the detail film for close analysis. It is also the most difficult to produce and to use skilfully.

One programme which the Navy has found applicable to a wide number and variety of subjects comprises a brief introduction by the instructor, then a film (usually ten to fifteen minutes), then film strip with instructor's commentary to punch home the detailed

lessons. After that, if time permits, there can be a second run-through of the film or the trainees can have their first brief practice in what they have seen.

Another important factor which emerges from a study of Admiralty instructional films is the growing importance of the diagram in film and film strip. The advocates of the diagram, both still and animated, declare that usually a drawing—air brush for example—achieves a reproductive value four times as good as a photograph. By eliminating focus problems, varying tones and extraneous details present in even a simple subject, the technical artist can produce a diagram which is clearer, more pleasing and more effective in instruction.

Here too, the Admiralty experts have obviously put in much valuable research—to find the right medium of drawing, the right colour formula suitable to each colour process and to achieve a standard of tone value for quick reproduction giving uniform (and maximum) clarity.

These, then, are some of the problems tackled by one service department. Other agencies are of course at work. The rich sum of knowledge and experience gained should prove of immense value in rebuilding our educative structure after the war.

Activity in Middle Asia

described by ALEXEI SAZONOV

OUR FILM studios in Central Asia have considerably expanded their production as well as attaining higher artistic standards during the course of the war.

Since July 1941 and up to the beginning of this year the film studios in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan and Turkmenia have released several dozen full-length feature films as well as a considerable number of war pictures pieced together from shorts.

Outstanding films made at Central Asian Studios are *Mashenka*, *The Secretary of the Regional Committee*, *Two Comrades*, *She Defends Her Country* (this has been shown in India), *Nasreddin in Bukhara*, *How Steel was Tempered*, *Rainbow*, *To the Strains of the Dombra* and others.

This increased activity of the Central Asia Film Studios is due partly to the fact that the Studios of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and Odessa, including some of the Soviet Union's most gifted film directors, actors, camera men and artists, were evacuated here.

As soon as the personnel of the Mosfilm and Lenfilm Studios from Moscow and Leningrad arrived at the Kazakh Film Studio in Alma-Ata, they immediately began training montage men, assistant directors, lighting engineers and other technicians from the local population. Some of the best of Kazakh's own writers, producers and actors were also drawn into the making of pictures.

Collaborating with the Leningrad and Moscow film directors, Alma-Ata studios produced two successful pictures based on national themes and material: *Braves of the Steppes*, about the part the people of Kazakh are playing in the war, and a musical review *To the Strains of the Dombra*, which shows the talent of Kazakhstan.

The Kazakh writers, A. Tadjibayev and K. Siranov, wrote the scenarios for these films, and art writers Z. Nazyrov and K. Hodjikov arranged the settings.

The Alma-Ata Studio has now begun shooting a film on national history called *Abai*. A poet and contemporary of Pushkin, savant and enlightener of the nineteenth century, Abai

is a colourful figure in Kazakh history. Gregory Roshal is producing the film with many Kazakh actors in the cast.

Nasreddin in Bukhara, a fantasy, and an Uzbek film review, were two highly successful productions of the Uzbek studio in Tashkent. Some time ago two young Uzbek directors began filming *Takhir and Zukhra*, based on Abdul Sabir's scenario. This is a charming story of love and romance, somewhat reminiscent of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

A film presenting the artistic talent of the peoples of Central Asia, with some of their most celebrated stage personalities is forthcoming from the Tashkent studio.

Since the beginning of the war, twelve full-length feature films have been released by the Tadjik studios in Stalinabad. Formerly these studios were engaged solely in the production of documentaries on topics of local interest.

The Turkmenian film studio in Ashkahabad, which released Wanda Wasilewska's *Rainbow* and Ostrovsky's *How Steel was Tempered*, two outstanding Soviet productions, will present *Magician's Smile* in 1944, the first picture by Atakhanov, the young Turkmenian film director.

At present the Central Asian film studios are working on twelve feature films. Reinforced by the experience of some of the leading Soviet film directors these studios are well on the road to independent film production.

Herman G. Weinberg writes

For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life, the same shall find it.

—The New Testament

SOME DID not even get a chance to fire —they fell as they scrambled up on the beaches under the withering crossfire of the coastal defences; their whole lives, all their hopes, dreams and desires from prattling babyhood to young manhood not more than a preparation for this—so that others could get through. And others that got through fell a few yards further in on the beach so that still others could get through. Eventually, the communiqués told us, a beach-head was established. Tarawa, Anzio Beach, the French coast—the story is always the same.

What is the lesson that this so bitterly teaches us? Among the many lessons that we are going to learn the hard way is the one that has to do with corruption in the arts. For a long time now the screen, to take the most popular art, has been pussyfooting, hedging and lying about the most vital issues, when not ignoring them altogether. We wallowed in the perfumed sheep dip of so-called "escapist" film while Guernica was being gutted, so today we cannot escape *The Battle of Tarawa* with its rigid bodies floating in the lagoon and the accusing arms of *rigor mortis* outstretched futilely from the water to us. We are going to learn that we *are* "our brother's keeper" and that we are not worth that they should die for us if we betray them again But we will be living and victory will have been achieved? No, we will be walking zombies, the living-dead, and though we fill our bellies our souls will rot and then let us not again "pray" to God for if our conscience is so deadened by hypocrisy, selfishness and greed as it has been, He will not answer.

Realism or Romanticism

Why is it that a Russian film about the war is so clear as to what war means, *vide*, Dovzhenko's *Ukraine in Flames*, and an American film, *The Purple Heart*, is not? Certainly,

Russian soldiers have been as heroic as American soldiers in battle—yet a Russian war film cries with pain and suffering and burns with a wild hatred, and an American film, like *Milestones*, is concerned for two hours in displaying only heroics and sends the audience away in a happy mood, confident that as long as "our boys" have the guts to take it, we're safe from the enemy. Is that a way to prevent future wars? That sort of attitude can allow war to go on and on. "American boys are brave—they'll always stand between us and whatever enemy." Ideology is a speck in the audience's eye—the camera lens is the rose-tinted glass through which the audience views the world. Study the faces of the American aviators just returned from a mission over Wilhelmshaven in *Memphis Belle*, the faces of those who got back and noticed a camera grinding away at them as they alighted with the pallor of death still in their eyes—then compare them with the faces of the "fliers" in *Purple Heart*.

And to make a war film whose point is so muddled that a violent controversy can arise as to whether it is or is not pro-Nazi is idiotic, and I'm afraid that's what Hitchcock's *Lifeboat* is. *The Voice in the Wind*, for all its heavy-handedness and lugubriousness, at least knew what it wanted to say and it was a thing worth saying—that war is wretched. There was no confusion about that. Should there be? Today, the war is a *fait accompli*—we know why we are fighting (we hope) and let this be a lesson to us.

Other Recent Films

As for the rest, there has been enough variety to suit every taste. *The Miracle of Morgan's Creek*, which, no doubt, you have seen by now, is brash, vulgar and immensely funny, a brazen comedy that is as typically American as anything could possibly be and no one but Preston Sturgess could have carried it off. He has the sly wit and light irony of Lubitsch without the latter's oriental voluptuousness, which, in an American director, is just as well. His forthcoming *Hail the Conquering Hero*, along the same pattern, promises from a résumé of its scenario to equal it. Sturgess is the closest we have come to a home-grown René Clair. The latter, transplanted to American soil, has not flowered here, to say the least, and *It Happened Tomorrow* again bewilders one that this is from the poet who gave us *A Nous la Liberté*.

Do you care for the frustrations of the Brontë sisters? Then you will simply dote on *Jane Eyre* which is as frustrated and nerve-wrecking as the most demure college girl could wish. And while you are in the mood for shocks, don't pass up *The Lodger*, with its Oscar Wildeish Jack-the-Ripper in the person of Laird Cregar, who plays the röle that Ivor Novello did so well back in Hitchcock's silent version. I'm sure Jack looked more like Novello and rather less like Cregar. Have these two films still left you frustrated? Then see *Lady in the Dark* and learn how lucky you are not to have the awful nightmares she has—and, mind you, she is Ginger Rogers! If one is as sleek and beautiful as Ginger and could still have nightmares, what's the use in living?

Do you believe in God? Then no explanation is necessary for you to view *The Song of Bernadette*. If you do not, then no explanation is possible. That is the substance of the foreword to the film. Werfel, who wrote the book on which the film is based, vowed that if he emerged alive from a concentration camp in Europe he would write a story to the glory of God. As far as Hollywood is concerned, this would seem to disarm all criticism of the film, which I'm sure, is faithful enough to the spirit of the book, but I recall another Werfel story, *The 40 Days of Musa Dagh*, which dealt with the massacre of the Armenians by the

Turks in the last war, and which M.G.M. refused to film (although they bought it) because it might antagonise Turkey and, perhaps, result in boycotting M.G.M.'s films in that country. (*The Song of Bernadette* is a Twentieth Century Fox film.) In any case, *Bernadette* certainly steps on no one's toes, although in the matter of *Musa Dagh*, I rather think God's toes were stepped upon, because He is part Armenian, but then as long as we think His memory is as short as ours, we will allow ourselves that many more days of grace. The span of life of man is short. Let us take what added days of grace we can.

New York, JUNE 10, 1944

New Zealand Newsreels

Contributed by JAMES HARRIS

REGULAR FILM production in New Zealand centres on the Government Film Studios just outside Wellington. These studios, comprising 35 and 16mm. laboratories, editing rooms, offices, and a 60 by 40ft. soundstage, were built by private enterprise to make tourist publicity films on Government contract. When the coming of sound made difficulties, the Government took over, and the studio staff now come under the public service administration.

Since August, 1941, the job of putting war publicity into the public cinemas has been entrusted to E. S. Andrews, who became the Dominion's first film producer. This reorganisation followed a visit by John Grierson, who was sent out to advise by the Imperial Relations Trust. University men, with experience of radio and journalism, as well as of film-making, were brought in and started work under the style of *New Zealand Film Unit*. At the present time their main product is a fourteen-print release titled *New Zealand Weekly Review*. Its physical distribution is carried out in double harness with "Overseas" newsreels. Its quality agreeably astonishes the New Zealand public. The Trade receives it free.

The earliest N.F.U. weekly reels were single item affairs, around 300ft., and as so often with the intellectual products of young countries, inclined to be high-falutin'. The tradition of pious departmental films with Cabinet Ministers' names on the credits was hard to break. The idea that Government films could get closer to their audiences by descending to the realms of humour, was hard to establish. Production staff would expend sweat and tears lightening the tone of a commentary, only to have a lugubrious member of the laboratory crew come in complaining "that was a crook reel we put out last week alright, nearly everybody in the theatre laughed at it!"

Today the typical *Weekly Review* is a three-item reel of 600-800 ft., which by convergent evolution, not imitation, has considerable resemblances to Britain's *Workers and Warfront*. There will probably be an item from a unit cameraman on the Italian or Pacific fronts, an industrial story and a topical news event. Sometimes there will be a definite propaganda item, exhorting power-saving, or extolling meat and butter rationing. Sometimes the whole footage is devoted to one item, as when the New Zealand Second Division landed in Italy, and again when the Third Division invaded Nissan. Most notably, it was done for the remarkable *Easter action on Bougainville* which was released at 1,500 ft., the longest yet in the weekly series.

Documentary Production

As compared to English conditions, the peculiarities of documentary film

work in New Zealand lie mostly in the self-contained nature of the studio, and in the New Zealand tradition of non-specialisation. Cameramen often do their own processing, directors their own negative-matching. When a spare part is wanted for a camera or processing-machine, somebody draws it, and the studio engineer makes it.

The Dominion's scenery photographs easily. Visibility is often excessive, and to get distances with atmosphere to them means rising before dawn. Interior work is simplified by voltages and three-pin points being fairly standardised throughout the two Islands. When installing lights in factories one remembers London's multiplicity of systems without regret! A curious local trouble arises from the New Zealander's phenomenal memory for names and faces—for the reel is being continually damaged by easy-going operators handing out frames of recognised friends. The authorities are too good-natured to prosecute for it. Insult was added when an operator sent clippings from a current reel to the studio still department for enlargements!

From the New Zealand end, it is disappointing that none of the mass of material sent to London gets used there. Whenever a film arrives here containing reference to New Zealand, the stock shot used is a veteran of the orthochromatic era. The one exception, *New Zealand Home Front*, from the Ministry of Information, did not get a good reception. It seemed ingeniously constructed to make these Islands look half the size of Sark, with hand knitting the main industry, and a total airpower of one D-H Dragon. A country budgeting £25 million reverse lend-lease, and boasting the "Fightingest" Airforce of the S. Pacific, is not amused.

British Shorts Condemned

Amongst the shorts received from Britain, we notice that anything that was not made by the Ministry of Information is usually terrible, nevertheless it is also the M.O.I. shorts that get into the theatres. There was for example a series on a gardening expert who is known to you but not to us, and it was so badly photographed as to be mostly invisible. Horace Sheppard, Mus. Bac. is so familiar as to be a stock character in studio morning-tea mythology. Other media sell us Britain as a place of clear thinking and vigorous action. On the screen, she seems the spiritual home of beating about-the-bush.

A word about *Easter Action on Bougainville*. This film was shot by cameraman Stan Wemyss during three weeks in the Empress Augusta Bay region and contains the best intimate material of infantry fighting that we have seen. The cameraman was not conventionally under fire on this job, he was in the fighting, swopping grenades with the Jap in company with a patrol of the now legendary Fijians, and later in company with American troops, coloured and white; and the stuff is all on the film. All Wemyss' film experience has been with New Zealand National Film Unit, and like one Hitchcock in another place, he originally entered the studios as a title-writer.

THE MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN

A few extra subscriptions [7*s*. 6*d*. a year post free] can now be accepted for the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, published by the British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

The Bulletin contains brief notices and appraisals of all feature films trade-shown, together with a list of shorts and re-issues which have appeared during the month. The Education Section contains reviews and appraisals of teaching films drawn up by committees of expert teachers.

Teaching Film Analysis

by Warden M. W. Beresford

The Percival Guildhouse, Rugby

MY experimental technique for teaching film analysis and construction to classes of varying size was evolved after experience of film appreciation teaching to various local Forces units under the Army Education scheme. For my first courses I had adopted the historical method: to show early films; to compare them with later films. Then to show the development of certain forms: cartoon, comedy, documentary; and to illustrate national characteristics in film making.

This was satisfactory for a time: but I always felt that practical interest on the part of the audience ought to be encouraged. In summer, 1943, I had a grant-earning civilian class where I decided to try out a new method for at least two of the twelve sessions. This was so successful that I took my courage in both hands and tried it the same week to an R.A.F. audience of some 200. It worked there; and just to prove that this wasn't due to the intelligence of the audience I repeated it on a larger Army audience, and am still repeating.

I began by deciding to take technical and aesthetic analysis quite separately, and only to point out afterwards that there is nothing which is technically perfect and aesthetically insignificant; nor anything aesthetically satisfying and technically poor.

For my technics I concentrated on the components of montage: the script; the angle and content of shots; the cutting; and the assembly of shots into the whole film. To get the audience to appreciate this I first of all ran over and defined some two dozen technical terms (as one might find them in Spottiswood's *Grammar of the Film*). I then distributed among the audience a set of cards: there were forty-eight of these, so that each term was repeated twice. I then ran through for general viewing a short M.O.I. picture (at first, *Special Despatch*); I then warned the audience that after the next showing I would invite each holder of a card to report on *one* use of the technical device appearing on the card he or she held. The duplication of cards helped to correct one reporter by another; to avoid the gap if one reporter became shy or diffident; and to begin discussion where reporters differed in opinion. It was possible by asking leading questions to provoke reporters into going beyond description of technical devices to criticism of their use and to assessment of their effectiveness.

When this discussion was over (and it always took longer than I had allowed for, so willing were the audience to talk) I ran the film through for a third time, mute, with the sound switched off, doing a running commentary myself on points which had arisen and anything new which I wished to mention.

I followed this up by another short film (M.O.I's *Now you're talking* or *All Hands*) which had plenty of illustrations of the commercial clichés. For this film I did not ask the audience to report back: but one could hear during its showing a buzz of comment on the shots.

For the second half of the programme I touched on æsthetics: referring back to the last film they had seen (which, in my opinion, provides an excellent example of films

technically slick but æsthetically poor) I put questions to the audience: what was the point of the film; did it make that point; what was the acting like; was the script credible; was the whole convincing? The audiences, having been made talkative by the earlier card-technique, were quite willing to wade in here. It is probable that when I next do the course I shall attempt to try the card-distribution technique on the aesthetic side also: the difficulty at the moment is framing enough questions to involve a large enough proportion of the audience.

But I believe that here is one solution of the problem of holding an adult audience—the participation of the individual in discussion; and of bringing film criticism down to tangible discussion.

Disc Recording *

A Review by B. E. GILLETT

THE ENTHUSIASTIC amateur cinematographer is for ever on the look-out for ways of improving his shows, and when circumstances permit, the time usually comes when he replaces his silent projector by one which will enable him to give his friends a more professional performance by the addition of sound. He is then able to hire feature films and his shows reach a new level of perfection. The only drawback now remaining is that his own films, so long regarded as his high lights, now appear to lack something. They are silent, and though he has always been able to supply his own commentary, he is tempted to think that if only that commentary came through the loud speaker, it would be much more in keeping with modern technique. Of course the simplest way of accomplishing this end is by the aid of a microphone, but however well the commentary is written and cut to fit the film, there will be times when it is difficult to keep the commentary in step with the picture. This may be well nigh impossible for anyone other than the owner of the film, who has written the commentary, and who knows almost every frame of the picture.

Sound on film recording is usually beyond the means of the amateur, and in any case must be done professionally thus robbing him of the satisfaction of personal achievement. He cannot say "all my own work" and this is a great source of disappointment to him. Fortunately there is another method which is not beyond the reach of the real enthusiast and gives him satisfaction in that he can construct and assemble much of the apparatus himself. This method is disc recording, and there has recently been published a most interesing little book entitled *Manual of Direct Disc Recording*. This is the first book to be published in this country dealing specifically with direct disc recording, and it is unfortunate that wartime conditions have limited the size of the book to 49 pages, but these pages are packed with information. The author describes the book as "primarily an introduction to the subject" but "the comprehensive list of references will enable the advanced

* *Manual of Direct Disc Recording* by Donald W. Aldous, M.Inst.E., F.R.S.A., A.S.M.P.E., Mem. R.S.G.B., published by BERNARDS (Publishers) Ltd. Price 2*s*. (An errata and addenda slip is included in the later copies of this book, but should it not be included it can be obtained free from the author c/o the publishers for a stamped addressed envelope).

amateur and professional recordist to consult original literature which describes in detail what can only be referred to briefly in this handbook". Bracketed references are given throughout the text and items of particular interest to the beginner are indicated throughout.

Slow Speed Recording

The book gives circuits for recording amplifiers, for coupling cutting heads, and details for building one's own recording console. There is available information on the placing of microphones for various types of recording and for most effective tracking of recording cutting heads and play-back pick-ups. Another section deals with various types of recording "blanks" and how they are used, while the faults that may occur are detailed, and symptoms, causes and cures indicated. The selected references section appears to cover all that has ever been published in this country and America on disc recording and associated subjects. There is a section devoted to details of reproduction standards for discs, and the book concludes with a glossary of technical terms used in recording. It may not be generally appreciated that the difficulty of continual changing of records has been overcome by the introduction of slow speed recording at 33 and 25 revolutions per minute instead of the usual 78 r.p.m. This too is dealt with in the book. In short this book can be recommended for the man with a smattering of knowledge of the subject as well as for the more advanced worker.

In addition to what one might term the entertainment value of disc recording there is a great field for experimental research in the use of discs with films and film strip for use in schools. Though the silent film is regarded by many as the ideal film for classroom use, the recording of a disc commentary will often make a film intended for use in a particular school or locality, suitable for use over a much wider area, and also by means of alternative commentaries fit the film for purposes or age groups different from those originally intended.

School Uses

Many schools in America already possess their own disc recording apparatus but it is very doubtful whether any school in this country has yet done anything on this subject. Here then is another field which is opened to the serious experimenter, who may evolve a technique of using disc with silent film or film strip, which may prove both useful and interesting, especially when it is realised that amateur recording can now be made with a perfection far above that achieved by acoustic toy recorders which had a certain degree of popularity a few years ago. It may even be that disc recording, discarded in the early days of talkies, in favour of sound on film, will prove to be the answer to a problem which sound films present when used for educational purposes. This difficulty is that one commentary, as provided by sound on film recording, is inadequate for various age groups and intellects who might profit by the visual material. The making of a multiplicity of versions differing only in the sound track is never likely to become an economic proposition, but disc recording does offer an alternative avenue for exploration. Another advantage of the method would be that it enables the visual side of the film to remain on silent stock, taken at silent speed and usable as a silent film with the teachers' own commentary if necessary.

Here then is the stage set for interesting experimental work, whether for one's own amusement, or for educational application and the publication of this book provides the technical information which is necessary for the making of discs.

Music for Silent Classics

by Stuart Keen

READING through John Huntley's article on Film Music in the January issue of SIGHT AND SOUND, which deals chiefly with music written by contemporary composers for specific films, I am prompted to write my views on the subject of Synchronised Musical accompaniment on gramophone records to silent films. This enhances their presentation 100 per cent., especially in respect of the old "classics" now chiefly available from the sub-standard libraries.

These films could not fail to be received with genuine enthusiasm by members of Film Societies and Clubs up and down the country if only the individuals directly concerned with their presentation would use the little imagination, ingenuity and extra trouble required to arrange accompaniments on ordinary commercial recordings.

I do not for a moment suggest that "music at any price", must be right. I know from experience gained the dangers of exaggerating or underestimating the tempo or dramatic situations which one is anxious to convey. But with a fairly extensive record library at my disposal, plus all manner of borrowing, I have not found it too complicated a matter to arrange near-perfect scores for all the silent films I have shown, with the result that many people have requested to be allowed to see them over and over again, on account of the immensely increased impression left on the mind by the music. I feel this reaction is somewhat of an innovation these days when the Cinema is taken so much for granted, bearing in mind also that the films I have shown in most cases have been drastically "cut" versions.

Two recent examples of my presentations with music have been *White Hell of Pitz Palu* and *The Blue Light*. In both cases I have not as yet adopted a cue sheet, but have worked from memory only as I know the sequences in the films and the records so well. It is not possible or desirable that I quote my scores sequence here, but the total number of records used are:—

Pitz Palu —Water Music (Handel) parts of Allegro and Bourree; German Dance "Sleigh Ride" (Mozart); Tallis Theme (Vaughan Williams); "Return of Lemminkainen" (Sibelius); parts of second movement 4th Symphony (Sibelius) and last movement; Wind Effects record; Total 7 discs. There may be raising of eyebrows in some quarters at the suggestion of Handel in the Alps, but the extracts I have used are very effective in the sequences they illustrate. "Lemminkainen" is magnificent for the avalanches; the "Howling Wind Effects", the only "sounds" used are very effectively "worked in" on the second turntable.

(*The music is simplified or retarded where required.*)

Blue Light —Egmont Overture (Beethoven); "Pastoral" Symphony (Beethoven) 1st. 2nd, 3rd and 5th Movements; "Il Seraglio" Overture (Mozart); 1st Mov. from 4th Symphony (Sibelius); Berceuse from "Tempest" (Sibelius); "Ruins of Athens" Overture (Beethoven); 2nd Mov. from 2nd Symphony (Beethoven) and "Bavarian Dance" (Rixner). Total 11 discs. Despite the genius of Walt Disney and his interpretation of the "Pastoral Sympathony", I prefer the setting offered me by this film!

The reader may ask "How does

one set about establishing a basis for the final score?" It is only necessary to project the film once in order to get a broad idea of atmosphere, tempo, highlights requiring particular emphasis etc. Then the search for "possibles" amongst recorded music begins. It is hardly necessary to stress the advantages of possessing a fairly wide knowledge of music, not *technically*, but as a *listener*, as obviously one can very often go straight to the works of specific composers, in fact I find that one's first choice is often the final one also. I say it is not necessary to have technical knowledge on the grounds that the assimilation of these scores requires a great deal of *imagination*, which is often lacking in the musical "technicians" or "purists"; and anyway the latter probably abhor the practice of "borrowing" established works of the masters for the purpose under discussion. Contemporary composers obviously offer more scope, whatever the style or setting of the film as their music is more "impersonal" and more readily adaptable to a modern medium like film. I have not done scores for the big Russian "silents" like *Potemkin* and *Storm over Asia*, but I imagine one would not have to look far amongst the works of Shostakovitch, Prokofiev and Moussorgsky in order to present these films to considerable effect.

Sibelius came to mind instantly for *Pitz Palu* and so well does it fit that at times one feels it might have been specially written for it, and doubtless Vaughan Williams or William Walton could have written magnificently for its original presentation.

The Process of Scoring

To come back to the scoring process however—having chosen a batch of records as "possibles", I then run the film over reel by reel, noting all changes of scene, development of "situations" etc., and earmarking the actual records which I consider most useful, then probably sections only of these discs are marked lightly with chalk so that these parts may be "faded in" when needed—in fact I seldom find that one complete side of a record is used. Volume is controlled, retarded or amplified as required. This is essential for a perfect presentation. The most difficult scenes to accompany are those in which there is no particular *action*, then the music must not become in any way obtrusive, not that this could be more ludicrous or irritating in a silent film than that which so often accompanies so many "dialogue" passages in current talkies, as pointed out by John Huntley.

Apparatus Used

The apparatus I use consists of two Electric Turntables and pick-ups each with volume control (essential); two Radio Sets with pick-up sockets (left at full volume); two lengths (50ft each) metal or rubber covered cable; small bedside lamp; or better still, in the place of the radio sets I have an amplifier connected to a large single speaker erected on a baffle board. The Radio sets or speaker are placed behind or beneath the screen, gramophones near the projector. I find it possible to do the whole show single handed, provided the projector is correctly "set" and focused before starting. The reproduction quality obtained is of course vastly superior to anything recorded on film.

My ideas are not by any means original, but I am convinced that the possiblities have not been fully explored. There is even scope for Silent Film Clubs. The Classics can be kept alive for many years to come by the adoption of well chosen accompaniments.

These notes are submitted I may say in conclusion as a very humble reminder to all those Societies who still hesitate to offer the Silent Classics which are still available even if they have suffered some mutilation.

Teacher Film Makers

by David Welsh of the S.E.F.A.

THE Production Group of the Ayrshire Branch of the Scottish Educational Film Association came formally and actively into being in the early part of 1938. Prior to this date (actually from its formation in 1935) the main energies of the Branch were thrown into the effort to build a strong and active organisation of County teachers interested in the film as an instructional and educational aid. By the end of 1937, that task became realised with the enrolment of 732 members, approximately 50 per cent of the entire teaching staff in the County. Incidentally, the present session has seen, despite war conditions, and the call-up of teachers, some 700 teachers register for membership, and that in Ayrshire alone.

Early Days

Even in the early days of the Branch, there were among the members a few individuals with a little film-making experience, professional and amateur, who embarked on the production of silent instructional films of local interest at their own expense and with cheap, privately owned cameras. The poverty of supply and general lack of quality in the then existing libraries of educational films gave rise to the suggestion that a Production Group be formed under the aegis of the Branch, financed so far as was possible from Branch funds. As the total income from the 2*s.* 6*d.* subscription was in the region of £70 annually, which sum had to cover purchase of projectors, expenses of lecturers, demonstrations, etc., it will be realised that the amount available for production was ludicrously insufficient. Despite this crippling drawback, enthusiasm thrust the matter forward and a small group of five members was formed.

Two films, meanwhile, *Wood-cutting in South Ayrshire*, and *Distribution of Ayrshire Coal*, had been completed privately by three of the members and were having some little success with Ayrshire teachers. This modest achievement stimulated the activity of the newly formed Group, which drafted and presented its first script for approval by the Branch experts. Having been approved *The Cat and the Kittens*, intended for infants and juniors, went into production on a budget of £31. Owing to the extra-mural activities of the members involved in the production the rapid natural growth of kittens, the sudden death of one or two of the latter, etc., only some 150 feet were shot and the film has as yet remained uncompleted.

Shot in a Blizzard

Only one further film was completed —and that privately—by a member of the Group: *Ballade for Trio.* This was a short story film intended for use in the teaching of English composition. It was undoubtedly the most physically exhausting film undertaken by any member, having been shot during the blizzard which swept the country in 1940.

The first faltering Group effort, backed by enthusiasm alone, gave way to a more sober estimation of the requirements of a production group however modest it might be. The Group owned literally nothing. It had no quarters, cameras and all the gear, simple and cheap though they were, were the property of individuals. And it had no cash. On the positive side, its assets were a more tempered

enthusiasm and a great desire to make instructional films, somehow.

The next best thing to film-making is talking about it. And so the second stage in the development of the Group began. Grimly refusing to shut up shop the members held regular meetings from 1938 onwards, at which discussions, arguments and mere coffee-drinking took place. Ideas for films poured in. Scenarios and scripts were written, discussed and altered. Formulations on the correct technique and form of the instructional film were thrashed out. The effect on the child mind of mixes, wipes, irises, fades etc., was discussed.

From all this welter of words, both written and spoken, was derived some considerable experience in the pre-shooting stages of film-making and much of theoretical value affecting form and content. Guiding principles were tentatively evolved and are now being put to the practical test of everyday class-room work. Although outside the scope of this brief account it may be permissible to state that these general principles conflict considerably with the normal technique of the commercial cinema today. All the evidence in the hands of the Group points to the urgent necessity of evolving an instructional film genre radically different from the accepted tenets of the professional cinema.

September, 1939 threatened the Group with extinction but, although deprived of two members during the ensuing year and a half, shadow meetings were held spasmodically. Then, out of the blue came the first "break" in the life of the Group. The Ayrshire Educational Trust, a body created by Scottish Educational Commissioners to centralise county educational bequests to disburse monetary grants to Ayrshire and students, was faced with some difficulty in utilising certain of its funds under war conditions. Dr. Hepburn, Director of Education for Ayrshire, who had shown a deep interest in the work of the Branch since its inception, considered the Production Group worthy of some financial support and recommended it to the notice of the Trust Governors. The recommendation was given full approval and, having secured the sanction of the Scottish Education Department for this venture, the Trust made a grant of £200 for session 1941-42. This grant was continued during 1942-43 and has since been raised to £400 per annum.

While a professional unit would undoubtedly consider such sums as mere petty cash, to the Group they meant untold wealth. A tumult of organisational and preparatory activity followed the award of the grant. Stock, a camera and some accessories were bought and so the Group became property owners for the first time. Production began on scenarios previously prepared and has continued without major interruption up to the present.

The table will give some idea of the type and range of work undertaken since the grant became payable.

Title	*Length*	*Age Group*	*Subject*	*Stock*
Making a Lino Block. ...	22 mins.	10–13	Art	Monochrom
The Honey Makers	12 „	12 upwards	Nat. St.	„
William Rowan the Cooper....	12 „	10	Crafts.	„
Dinner Time....	19 „	14 „	Civics.	„
Flowers of the Countryside....	50 „	10 „	Art & Nat. St.	Colour
Flax.	9 „	12–15	Geog.	„
Simple Simon. (E)	8 „	5–7	English.	„
Autumn. (E)	6 „	10–12	„	„
Reaping the Harvest	15 „	11 upwards	Geog.	„
Life and the Hill Lamb. (E)	4 „	16 „	Biology.	„
Mining Village.	22 „	12 „	Geog.	Monochrome
Roundabout No. 1	12 „	7 „	Interest	

Titles marked (E) are experimental films, while *Flowers of the Countryside* is a series of short four-minute films each complete in itself, depicting some well-known wayside flowers. The above list gives those films actually completed. In production at the moment are nine more titles including two parallel series to *Flowers of the Countryside—Trees of the Countryside* and *Birds of the Countryside*. Four others are experimentals in the subject of English, art, geometry and arithmetic. Of the remaining two, one is a junior-school film on farmyard animals the other a second "Roundabout". Some seven or eight further titles are scheduled for completion before the end of the year while a considerable number of scripts had to be pigeon-holed owing to military restrictions or to the closure of a number of small handcraft trades consequent on war conditions.

The success of the films so far produced can best be gauged from the result of the "Elder Trophy" competition of 1943, when "Making a Lino Block" was placed first with special commendation, and "William Rowan the Cooper" second.

Experiment

It will be noticed that a considerable proportion of the work of the Group is experimental. The value of such work is obvious. Little or no experimentation has been done on the form, length and content of instructional film, especially with reference to the infant and junior schools. While the efforts of the Group in this respect are in their early stages some interesting information has come to light which holds possibilities for further study and inquiry.

One of the great difficulties facing the Group at present is that of enlarging its membership, now six in number. A scheme whereby interested and enthusiatic, if technically inexperienced, county teachers will be admitted to membership to undertake simple but controlled work has recently been issued. Results are awaited. Additional apparatus and cameras have been acquired to meet present needs although, as yet, it has been financially impossible for us to obtain a camera capable of single picture exposures for moving-diagram work. Much remains to be done, but the Group is consolidating its position fairly rapidly as an efficient unit within its limitations

Future Possibilities

It is difficult to assess the probable future of the Group at present. As has been stated, it depends on a year to year grant of money arising from war conditions. Peace may see this withdrawn or curtailed in favour of the pre-war schedule of allocations operated by the Trust governors. Should this happen then the work of the Group will undoubtedly suffer. Again, the production of educational and instructional films has reached a point where a national policy becomes an urgent necessity, if matters are not to revert to the chaotic, uncontrolled and unsatisfactory position as obtained prior to 1939. In the event of such a policy being realised, all instructional units, professional and non-professional alike, will require to undergo some modification of integration within the framework of the scheme. It would be a pity if, in such a re-organisation, the Ayrshire Teachers' Group and its counterparts throughout the country were to find no place. Progressive and informed opinion demands a planned and co-ordinated mode of production under a central authority. Teachers' Groups have much of value to offer. Their experimental work is possibly the only work of its type being undertaken in Britain today. Their personnel, while not having the high degree of technical skill of the professional worker, due to lack of opportunity, have yet acquired a complete mastery of their limited facilities.

Notes & News

British Film Institute

There has already been a gratifying response to the Governors' decision to hold two courses this summer. Both will take place at the University College of North Wales, Bangor.

The first, which takes place between August 19 and August 26, will concern itself with Visual Education. The syllabus is designed mainly to be of interest to teachers and others directly concerned with education. For instance, considerable emphasis is placed on rôle to be played by different forms of apparatus. Experts will examine the value of film and other material in teaching different subjects such as geography, science or history. There will also be one or more shows every day of teaching films.

The second course will take place between August 26 and September 2. It will deal exclusively with Film Appreciation and will be of interest to teachers, youth organisers and others who realise the important part played by films in the lives of many of our fellow-countrymen and who wish to replace their visually passive attitude by an active one.

The links between the Institute and the youth organisations are developing fast. There are a stream of requests for lectures of film appreciation, for advice on how to make the best possible use of a projector, where to get films on different subjects and so forth. As one contribution to the subject the Institute has published a short leaflet on *Films and Youth Organisations* (6*d*.) Special reference is made to the forms of assistance that can be given by local education authorities. At the same time certain general principles are stated. For instance: 'There should be no attempt in the club to compete with commercial cinema. . . The main purpose of the film in the life of the club or youth centre will be its use in connection with other club activities, as a medium of inspiration and instruction.' There is also an appendix which gives some hints to leaders on the possible uses to which they can put films in their work.

In the press is another and larger pamphlet which tries to give in simple terms the points to look for in film. It is the first time, it is believed, that an attempt has been made to write a grammar of film criticism. It is hoped that it will be published before the winter programme starts.

The Institute's Educational Panel has been very active. It is reconsidering its constitution and terms of reference to see whether improvements cannot be made leading to more effectual work. A special sub-committee is also considering the whole problem of the research which ought to be carried out in order that our knowledge of these new methods of education may be increased and our practice founded on proven fact.

Arising out of a small meeting of teachers in Junior and Central Schools, the Governors have published *The Content of Educational Films* (6*d*.), described as an interim statement on the requirements of educational films with special reference to the Primary School. This is quite an important document analysing as it does the uses to which films are put, the types of film which are wanted and the general requirements if successful films are to be made. The authors have some pointed things to say on such matters as artistic shots which they maintain should not be included merely because they are artistic and have only a slight relevancy to the subject. On the subject of commentaries they recommend a simple unhurried statement going at the rate of 100 words a minute. They go on to say that the commentary should not be facetious or spoiled by wisecracks which may not be understood by the child audience. They are also of the

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opinion that dialect in the commentary is to be depreciated and should only be introduced to add interest or to give local colour.

Miss Dorothy Grayson, the Institute's travelling representative and organiser, continues to be extremely active. Her work has taken her to most of the training colleges,all of whom now seem to be alive to the importance of considering visual methods in their training of teachers. She has also come across some interesting developments in the use of films for training apprentices in industry and for welfare work.

The National Film Library

A number of new films has been acquired for preservation, either by gift or purchase. They include 22 recent feature films donated by Messrs. Paramount, Warner Bros. and G.F.D. The list includes such well remembered titles as *Arise my Love, Gulliver's Travels, Airforce, Casablanca, We Dive at Dawn, First of the Few,* and *Helzapoppin.* Fifty early interest films have been acquired from the executors of the original owner who collected them before 1914.

Arising out of the agreement reached with the renters and the producers to allow the Library to have prints of recent films for film appreciation and educational purposes, the Selection Committee is getting out a first list of features which are wanted. It is hoped that these new titles will have been added to the Loan Section of the Library before the winter's work commences.

The routine work of chemical testing and cataloguing continues. Both are unspectacular but extremely valuable. A new block of storage vaults, incorporating the lessons learned from the experience of the other blocks, is rapidly approaching completion.

Scottish Film Council

Throughout the last few months several interesting developments have taken place in Scotland.

Probably the most interesting event has been the request received from the Advisory Council on Education to present evidence with regard to future policy in connection with development on educational films in Scotland. A deputation representative of the Film Council and the Scottish Education Film Association attended St. Andrew's House and received a very cordial reception from the members of the Council. In the course of their argument the deputation emphasised the importance of the film being related to the age group of the children—in this connection they emphasised the value of the silent film—and went on to stress the importance of the Regional Library to the development of this work.

This year the Library has continued with the success of previous years. As was anticipated, the output of films has not shown the striking increase of previous years, but the fact that the level attained the year before of over 40,000 issues in a session has been maintained, is regarded as very satisfactory when due regard is taken of the increasing shortage of film stock and the increasing number of casualties among projectors. The Scottish Education Film Association—as was mentioned in earlier reports—has had one of its most active years since the outbreak of war. Many of the branches have resumed normal activities and a number of post-war committees are now busily engaged in surveying the situation as it is likely to develop in the immediate post-war years.

The Scottish libraries continue to show an active interest in the possibility of the use of the film. In addition to the work that they have been putting in, in co-operation with the Ministry of Information, two centres have now begun to develop an extensive use of films on their own. In every case they find that this development is meeting with enthusiastic local support.

Following the issue of the pamphlet on the use of the film in youth clubs, Scottish Youth Leaders Training Association this August are running their first training school for youth leaders. This school is to be held at St. Andrews in the first week of August.

Probably, however, the most interesting development in the film development of Scotland has been the evidence of interest shown by the Scottish Office in the policy of stimulating films about Scottish life. These films have everywhere received a warm welcome and have shown that, given films of significance, there is a large Scottish audience to come and see them.

Manchester and District Film Institute Society

The Society has recently concluded its work for the year 1943-44 with the Annual General Meeting.

The Secretary's and Treasurer's reports showed that in view of the uncertainty which had prevailed at the beginning of the year, considerable satisfaction could be derived from a review of the year's activities.

Concern was expressed that more should be done in the educational field. This suggestion met with general agreement and

plans for the coming year include the establishment of film appreciation groups and a larger number of specialist documentary programmes in addition to the provision of standard film shows.

Merseyside Film Institute Society

The film show in May was the closing event of the 1943-44 Season. The feature was Strand Films' *Battle for Music*, the wartime story of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and the screening of this film in the home of the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra evoked a particularly sympathetic response in an audience which included a large number of concert-goers. Donald Taylor, who produced and directed the film, was present at both performances and spoke to the audience on the renaissance of British films.

In July the Society arranged two shows for other oganisations, one for the Liverpool Co-operative Society in connection with the Co-operative Movement's Centenary, and the other for the Anglo-French Benevolent week.

The Rector of Liverpool tells us that he has been highly satisfied with the attendance at the series of 16 mm. shows organised by the Society at the Liverpool Church, and he is contemplating a further series on similar lines.

The membership of the Society has practically doubled in the past season, and there is every hope that the new season will see the membership figures outstripping the pre-war record.

Chester Film Society

The Society has just completed its first season. Membership remains steady at 150 and the financial position is sound.

It is hoped that some members will be able to attend the Summer Schools, and then make up for the loss of opportunity for discussion which prevails in wartime.

The Society hopes to include *Le Bonheur*, *Roman d'un Tricheur*, *Der Ammenkoenig* and *Citizen Kane* in the coming season's programmes.

Edinburgh Film Guild

Mr. Norman Wilson, Chairman, addressed the Edinburgh Film Guild's Annual General Meeting, and said that:

The international character of our Sunday performances has been well mantained, despite wartime difficulties; a notable contribution to the study of the film as an art was the Exhibiton of Film Dêcor which was held under the Guild's auspices in the National Gallery last autumn. This was the first important assembly of paintings and sketches by famous art directors ever brought together. It brought to public notice the great importance of the artist in film production and aroused widespread interest and press comment not only in Edinburgh but in London and elsewhere. Many requests were received for the loan of the Exhibition but unfortunately it was not possible to retain the original designs for such a purpose.

In the interest of what we have termed the progressive application of the film, several performances were held. One of the most interesting of these was a programme of Scientific Films, and as a result of this a committee has been set up under the guidance of Professor James Ritchie to organise an independent Edinburgh Scientific Film Society.

By far the most important of these special performances was that devoted to new films produced under the auspices of the Scottish Office. The importance of these films lies not in their individual merits but in the fact that they have been carefully planned as part of a developing programme covering many aspects of Scottish life. They indicate a new and welcome recognition of the cinema as a lucid and graphic medium for the analysis of social problems and for the presentation of new ideas.

If the cinema can work for the good of the nation it can also work for the good of the City. Edinburgh's name and fame, what she stands for and what she produces, must be kept fresh in the minds of the people all over the world.

The best medium for achieving this is the film, with its vivid powers of persuasion and description. Among its post-war aims the council of the Film Guild has suggested that there should be set up a Films of Edinburgh Committee, widely representative of all the public interests in the city, which would have as its object the presentation of Edinburgh on the screens of the world.

Belfast Film Society

The newly formed Belfast branch of the Association of Scientific Workers joined forces with the Belfast Film Society for a special show of scientific films, under the title *Science on the Screen*, the penultimate show of the 1943-4 season and the first of its kind ever presented in Northern Ireland.

The last show of the season consisted of two Soviet films, the charming fairy-tale *The Magic Fish*, the workmanlike and exciting *Lone White Sail*, and Disney's *Symphony Hour*.

At the Annual General Meeting, under the presidency of Lady Brooke, business was followed by the first showing of an amateur burlesque thriller *More Deadly than the*

Male, made before the war by two members, a clever extravaganza in the Fritz Lang-Hitchcock style, ingeniously turning lack of technical facilities to brilliant account.

Readers who find themselves in Northern Ireland during the coming autumn and winter are invited to get into touch with the Secretary, Mr. A. Arnold, 6 College Green House, Belfast, from whom particulars of current shows will be obtainable.

Irish Film Society

The film shows for the 1944-45 season will be given in the popular Regal Rooms Cinema, which is both central and comfortable, but holds just over 100 less than our previous venue, so it will be necessary to limit our membership next year to 800.

We have departed from our usual line of films for next season's shows. A British and an American revival are on our list, *Young and Innocent* from Britain, and *His Girl Friday* from the U.S.A. Others voted for showing are *Kameradschaft*, *Lone White Sail*, *Hotel du Nord*, *Le Strange Monsieur Victor*, and *Der Spiegel*.

The Film School has interviewed prospective students for the coming season, and the school's film unit which has been at work on location at the village of Lough Shinng for their latest production: *Mannons' Acre*. Interiors are being shot in an empty house in the city.

The Children's Film Committee has drafted its plans for the next season, and hopes, among other things, to organise a series of childrens' matinées in the suburbs.

Bradford Civic Theatre

"Private film shows are winter activities at Bradford, and our last was in April, when we showed *The Blue Angel*. Great interest was shown in this revival, and every one agreed that the film wore extremely well. There was also a feeling after seeing it, that the modern talkies "talk too much", the mixture of silent and sound technique seemed to catch the imagination of the audience.

The high light of our film activities recently has been a visit and talk from the famous Mme Francoise Rosay. It was extraordinarily interesting to meet her, after long admiring her great work in French films, and she gave a most stimulating talk—*Un Peu De Cinema*. She made interesting comparisons on American and French methods of production, and her remarks on acting and her own way of getting inside the skin of a part were listened to with keen absorption. She is a brilliant speaker and a great personality.

Scientific Films Association

A joint meeting of the Association for Scientific Photography and the Scientific Film Association was held at the Ministry of Information on 24th June, 1944 to dicuss *The Construction and Presentation of Scientific Films*.

Mr. Arthur Elton, the President of the Scientific Film Association, opened the meeting by introducing the work of the two Associations. He said that to achieve democratic self-government in any country it was necessary for the citizens to have a knowledge of the scientific processes which governed their lives. Both the Associations were really engaged in public education—not so much in teaching everyone how to solve differential equations, which was not of such importance, but rather in general information which would lessen the danger of the public being led away by filibusters such as those who had led away the countries of our enemies.

Boy Scouts Association

The Boy Scouts Movement is doing valuable work among the native boys in the

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Colonies. The Ministry of Information is undoubtedly alive to the importance of the Movement in the Empire. This is evidenced by the fact that work is almost completed on a two-reeler film which is being produced by the British Colonial Film Unit of the M.O.I. from a story by F. Haydn Dimmock, Editor of *The Scout*.

All the players are members of the Scout Movement. The Director of the film, Victor Gover, being an old Scout, has a sound understanding of the aims and ideals of the Boy Scouts. He has special gifts in directing young people and the excellent performance of the boys in this picture is largely due to his intelligent and skilful direction.

The headquarters of the 1st Oatlands Scout Troop, Weybridge, was turned into a studio, and the location scenes were shot in the neighbourhood of Weybridge, and the Boy Scouts Association camping ground, Tolmers, near Cuffley, Herts.

The film, when ready, will be made available to the Colonies and will carry a commentary in many native dialects.

The Workers' Film Association

The Association continues to add new films to the library. Recent additions include *Brave Girl*, a Soviet film of how a Russian schoolgirl obtained admission to a guerilla unit dressed as a boy, *Battle for the Ukraine* and some Soviet medical films such as *Red Army Hospital* and *Red Army Medical Service*. Other new Soviet films include *Daghestan* and *Bread Bakery and Confectionery*.

During the last week of July, a Film School was held at the Birmingham University, when the speakers included John Grierson, Bernard Miles, Geoffrey Bell, Roy Boulting, D. C. Finch. The School was preceeded by a National Film Conference on *The Post-war Use of Films*; speakers: Paul Rotha, J. C. Crowther and Alderman J. Reeves.

Central Council for Health Education

Copies of two new films made for the Central Council for Health Education will be available by the end of July. *Round Figures*, (16 mm., 8 minutes), intended for general audiences deals in a light-hearted fashion with the evil effects of bad posture. *A Flying Start* (16 mm., sound., 11 minutes), designed particularly for prospective mothers and young women, effectively puts over the case for breast-feeding. A third film *Uncle Timothy's Tea Party*, will be completed in August. This is designed to persuade children that healthy habits are worth-while. 'Uncle Timothy' keeps a taxidermist shop and while taking tea with him and admiring his animals and models, Bobby, Vera and George learned many useful facts about their own bodies.

These films may be borrowed from the Central Council for Health Education, Tavistock House, Tavistock Square, London, W.C.1. No charge is made to borrowers in the areas of those Local Authorities (the vast majority) which subscribe to the Council's funds, but bookings should be made well in advance as the number of copies is limited.

National Film Society, Montreal

Mr. Jean Carreau, the Production Manager to the Society, writes:

The fourth season of this branch of the National Film Society under the present administration has now ended. For the fourth year in succession, we are pleased to report solvency at the end of the season.

During the year, these are some of the productions screened.

For the first showing in Montreal:

FORGOTTEN VILLAGE: John Steinbeck's outstanding film on Mexico sorcery.

LE NOUVEAU TESTAMENT: Sacha Guitry's satire on marriage.

NATIVE LAND: An important sociological document with Paul Robeson.

TIME IN THE SUN: An artistic film on old Mexico made by Sergei Eisenstein.

LENIN IN OCTOBER: Russian contemporary history.

CLAUDINE A L'ECOLE: A French film of adolescent youth.

Four revivals:

THE GRAPES OF WRATH: Academy award winner of 1940.

CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI: An impressionist film of 1919 with Conrad Veidt.

SCHOOL FOR HUSBANDS: An English comedy. (With apologies for bad sound-track.)

HAPPY TIMES AND JOLLY MOMENTS: Mack Sennett's best comedies.

Sociological documentaries:

THE 400 MILLION: The history and culture of modern China.

POWER AND THE LAND: The coming of electricity to rural districts. (U.S.A.)

DECANIA: A coloured film on Jewish settlements in Palestine.

Outstanding shorts shown for the first time in Montreal:

EXPERIMENTS IN DEATH: (U.S.S.R.) An excellent scientific film.

EASTER ISLAND: A survey of this island and its monolithic statues.

LOT IN SODOM: A surrealist and fantastic film.

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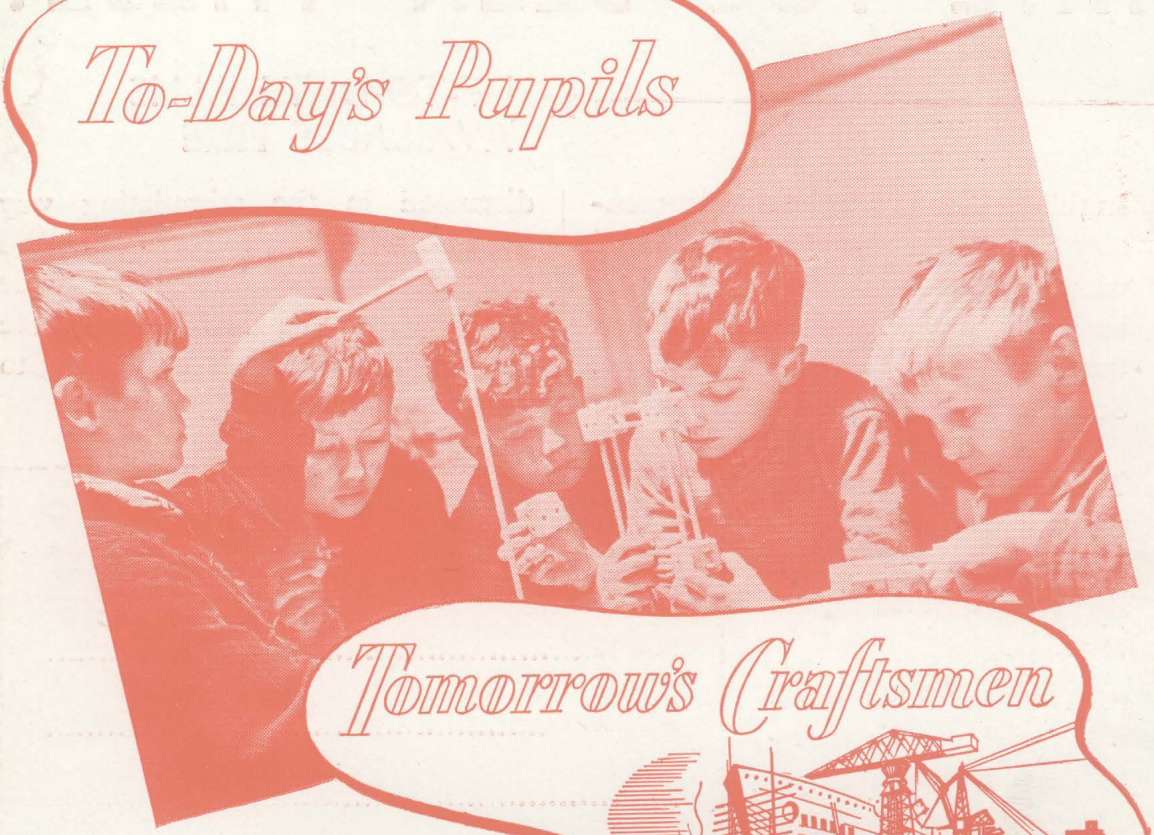
To-Day's Pupils



Tomorrow's Craftsmen

Speaking of the Education Act the Prime Minister said "I do not think we can maintain our position in the post-war world unless we are an exceptionally well-educated people, and unless we can handle easily and with comprehension the problems and inventions of the new scientific age".

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